



## SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

### **GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **Interim Guidelines for Personnel Boarding Maritime Vessels from Areas with SARS**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is tracking reports of outbreaks of a respiratory illness called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). CDC has issued two types of notices to travelers: advisories and alerts. A **travel advisory** recommends that nonessential travel be deferred; a **travel alert**, does not advise against travel, but informs travelers of a health concern and provides advice about specific precautions. CDC updates information on its website on the travel status of areas with SARS ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm)), as the situation evolves.

The primary way that SARS appears to spread is by close person-to-person contact. Potential ways in which SARS can be spread include touching the skin of other persons or objects that are contaminated with infectious droplets and then touching the eye, nose, or mouth. This can happen when someone who is sick with SARS coughs or sneezes droplets onto themselves, other persons, or nearby surfaces. It is also possible that SARS can be spread more broadly through the air or by other ways that are currently not known. Preliminary studies in some research laboratories suggest that the virus may survive in the environment for several days.

As with many other infectious illnesses, one of the most important ways to prevent infection with SARS is to keep your hands clean, either by frequent washing with soap and water or by use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Detailed information about hand hygiene is available at the CDC website ([www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/](http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/)).

There is currently no evidence that SARS infection is spread through contact with objects or packages including those arriving from areas with SARS ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm)). Special handling of such items is not indicated; however, hand hygiene as described above is recommended for routine prevention of infections. For prevention of SARS in the workplace ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/workplaceguidelines.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/workplaceguidelines.htm)), the routine use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators, gloves, or surgical masks for protection against SARS exposure is currently not recommended, except when providing medical care to suspected SARS patients.

If a passenger or crew member must be detained or assisted and appears to have a respiratory illness or may have traveled from one of the areas listed above, try to keep him or her separated from the other passengers as much as possible and immediately contact the appropriate authorities and assistance such as the U.S. Quarantine Station ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/quarantine\\_stations.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/quarantine_stations.htm)) with jurisdiction and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). In the interim, provide the ill passenger with a surgical mask, if available. A surgical mask can reduce the number of droplets coughed into the air. If a surgical mask is not available, provide the passenger with tissues and ask him or her to cover his or her mouth and nose when coughing. When an ill passenger is unable to wear a surgical mask, others onboard should wear surgical masks when in close contact with the patient.

Persons who develop symptoms of SARS ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/factsheet.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/factsheet.htm)) within 10 days of being in close contact with someone with suspected SARS, or within 10 days of arriving from an area with SARS, should follow the precautions described in CDC's exposure management guidance

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([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/exposuremanagement.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/exposuremanagement.htm)). Persons who have been exposed and have symptoms should not go to work, school, church, or other public areas; and should seek health-care evaluation promptly. Before the evaluation, the individual should inform their health-care providers about the possible exposure to SARS so arrangements can be made to prevent the possibility of spreading the infection in the health-care setting.

### **Related Links**

SARS Information for Travelers ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm))

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars) or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)

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